Integrating *The Avid Listener* into the Classroom

Dedicated to the idea that music criticism can be both literate and fun to read, *The Avid Listener* features weekly essays about popular, world, and Western art music written by rising scholars from all over the United States. This ever-updating accompaniment to Norton’s renowned music list gives readers the skills to analyze and discuss some of their favorite tunes while learning about practicing musicians, the industry, and new trends. With *The Avid Listener*, students discover how to listen broadly and deeply, to approach music with a curious spirit and a sense of adventure. Current and upcoming topics include: modes of listening (avid, structural, spiritual, and distracted); Hip-hop and cultural diplomacy; gender and music narratives; film music; musical notation; authenticity and interpretation; protest music; music and place; songwriting and recording; music and literature; and video game music. We will post frequent digests to facilitate site navigation by topic. Each digest will also include a list of upcoming essays so instructors can plan lessons and assignments in advance.

Instructors can integrate *The Avid Listener* into their music history and appreciation courses in a variety of ways. The editorial team suggests the following approaches, from the simple to the complex.

1. Each featured essay concludes with a series of questions. These may be used to prompt discussions both in-class and on-line, depending on how the course is organized.

2. Some of essays are organized as extended conversations about a single theme, such as Hip-hop diplomacy, protest music, modes of listening, authenticity and interpretation, music and literature, and women/gender and music. Assign students an entire series of essays to prompt in-class discussion about both the extended topic and the ways that the author(s) sustain an argument over a series of essays.

3. Assign students to respond in writing to a single essay, either in the context of music the class has studied as a group or encouraging them to choose from other repertories. The students’ writing, whether posted to the blog as a comment or submitted directly to the instructor, can then be improved and/or expanded through peer review and revision.

4. Assign students to find examples in their textbook/anthology that connect to, illustrate, complicate, or contradict the examples and arguments provided in an *Avid Listener* post. This could be assigned to an individual, small group, or used to prompt online or classroom discussion.

5. Have students find examples from outside their textbook/anthology (e.g., YouTube, Spotify, etc.) that connect to, illustrate, complicate, or contradict the examples and arguments provided in an *Avid Listener* post. This could be merged with the preceding assignment, and likewise could be assigned to an individual or small group, or used to prompt online or classroom discussion.

We hope you find these useful, and we’d love to hear about any ideas you come up with yourself! Please feel free to contact the editorial team with questions, comments, and concerns.

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